companion by an Empress Dowager of the Northern Wei to acquire Buddhist books, reached India by the overland route and arrived home in 521.

Chinese monks were not content simply with translations of the Indian scriptures of their faith, but began the production of an independent native literature on Buddhism.

Through the labors of the missionaries and their converts Buddhism became extremely popular. It did not always have smooth sailing. Not until 335 did the state permit native Chinese to become monks—although many had previously done so—and on several occasions monarchs of Confucian or Taoist convictions instituted persecutions, destroying monasteries and ordering the monks back into secular life. The old order was not so moribund that it could offer no resistance. Often, however, Buddhism was espoused by the rulers, an act which could not fail to augment the popular following. Devotees of Buddhism were found both among the Chinese monarchs of the South and the non-Chinese princes of the North. Probably the most famous of the southern imperial converts was Liang Wu Ti who, as we have seen, after being an earnest Confucianist, in middle life embraced Buddhism. He publicly expounded Buddhist sutras, collected a Chinese edition of the Tripitaka, issued edicts against animal sacrifices, was a strict vegetarian, and three times retired to a monastery. Several monarchs of the Northern Wei, of the T'u Pa line, stand out as patrons of the faith. At least two of them opposed it, but the majority endorsed it. Some even took part in Buddhist ordinations and preached Buddhist sermons. We read of thousands of monasteries and of hundreds of thousands of monks, and have a report that in 381 nine-tenths

of the inhabitants of Northwestern China were Buddhists. Accurate statistics are, of course, lacking, and these numbers are probably exaggerations, but taking as a whole the centuries between the Han and the Sui Buddhism undoubtedly grew in popularity. By the advent of the Sui it had become an integral and powerful part of Chinese life.

Both Hinayana and MaKayana Buddhism were found in China, but Mahayana predominated and became standard.

Buddhism had a manifold influence upon the life of the period. Religiously it introduced new conceptions, among them many